794 778 "After the creation came the consecration. The Kouroubari and the leaders of the people witnessed it. A white ox, a red ox, and a red rooster were sacrificed for the occasion (2)."

2. Raffenel, Nouveau voyage au Pays des Nègres [New Journey to the Country of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 237.

The boli is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put in a sack or other receptacle, and except during ceremonies it [846] is stored with other cult objects in a kind of temple often resembling a miniature native hut and called nyana-bon', "hut of the nyana."

[776] Obviously there are differences between the various nyana, because peculiar practices call up unlike spirits. In any event, however, the captive spirit is, as it were, a slave of the magician, who treats it as such and even sells it, along with instructions for its use. There are magicians who go from place to place, making and selling nyana and other magic weapons, and [443] there are recognized markets where one can always [256] obtain the boli of the most popular nyana. The markets at Bélédougou, Bendougou, and Follona are especially well known.

Trade in Boli

794 778 438 The chronicle of Ségou tells that Biton, the founder of the empire, acquired his principal idols in the Bendougou region where the popular markets of Moribala, Kourbadougou, and Diali are located.

Itinerant merchants deal in all sorts of cult objects, and there are settled traders who are sometimes very well known, like a certain Minkoli who made boli and was so famous that his village is named after him: Minkoli ka dugu (village of Minkoli). I have never been able to find out, however, which village in the Bendougou area was the home of the famous Minkoli.

By such means the cult of a given nyana, once it has been created, spreads to some extent, depending on the degree

794 to which its creator chooses to reveal the ritual of initiation.
778 The head of a family, just like an isolated individual
438 or the head of a large community, will not fail to acquire, for a monetary consideration, exclusive possession of one of these powerful boli, which becomes his personal protector. Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, had with him the nyana n-Ka; Biton, the founder of the empire of Ségou, possessed several famous nyana: na n-Golo-ko (1), Nye-n-dinge du (2), and ba Kung-o-

[776]

1. Literally, na-n-Goloko, "the mother concerned with birth" or, freely translated, "the goddess who presides at birth."

2. Nye dinge du, "the deep orbit of the eye."

ba (3). Generally speaking, these private cults cannot spread,

3. Ba-kung-o-ba, "mother of the great bush."

but when their possessor becomes a powerful chief, they migrate rapidly. This is what happened to Biton's cults; his followers took up the worship of his idols.

794 When an individual becomes the acknowledged possessor of a nyana the result is an alliance with this nyana, which in the native language is called furu, the same word as that used for the [833] conjugal union of a man and a woman. Indeed, the installation of a renowned nyana in its master's village gives rise to rejoicing [257] similar to that occasioned by a wedding; hence, the following expressions: a ye boli furu, "he is united with a boli"; a ye boh' furu gosi, "he has effected a union with a boli"; a-ta boli konyo kera, "he has celebrated the wedding of his boli." On the day of such festivals, the master of the nyana (nyana-tigi or boli-tigi, surrounded by his acolytes, offers dlo to his guests who have come to greet him and give him presents. At nightfall, when the uninitiated have withdrawn, the clergy and the adepts in a procession take the boli to the "sacred wood" where the first cult ceremony is held, characterized principally by dancing and singing.

439 By the south -- Guinea: rubber, ivory, gold, livestock, rice, millet. Ivory Coast: Sahel salt, livestock, wax, karite, native cotton and wool cloth and blankets. Gold Coast: livestock, native cloth.

443 In addition, all centers of any importance had a large periodic market which was a sort of regional fair, plus a small daily market which permitted the inhabitants of the locality to obtain provisions as needed.

b. Caravan Commerce

443 484 Over and above these markets, a long-distance caravan trade is carried on by the Haoussa and the Dioula, who transport their merchandise in the north with beasts of burdens, in the south by human bearers. These movements continue a commercial tradition and have been altered only by legislation. Before the conquest, any man who wished could enter this commerce on the condition of paying his "Fama" the usual sum. The traders, to protect themselves against brigands, traveled [42] in caravans. Practice had it that the [787] traders consulted a priest before leaving to find out if their undertaking would succeed. After the usual sacrifices, the priest revealed the name of the one who would direct the group. The caravan chief could even be a captive, but everyone owed him obedience because a divine force inhabited him. To each state which is crossed, the [651] caravan paid a customs fee on entering and asked the Fama for permission to cross, indicating the extent of their route and making propitiatory sacrifices in each region. Sometimes certain districts, such as the region of Bougouni, forbade blood sacrifices for fear of bringing down evil forces on themselves. The caravans then let loose an animal secretly at night.

c. Commercial Practices

438 643 Everything could be sold except gold, which was the property of the Fama. No one was supposed to possess gold. If the gold miners of Bouré could sell the gold extracted from the mines, when the buyers entered the Bambara country, they had to present it to the Fama. If he did not wish to buy it, he authorized certain rich people permanently settled in the district (that is, who would be unlikely to leave) to buy

438 643 [648] the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to anybody other than the Fama. Aside from certain sacrificial uses and the making of jewels for the Fama's wives, gold served to ransom captives or to negotiate royal alliances.

435 [286] The price of the commodities was set by agreement between buyer and seller, except for cloth which had a fixed price, 100 cowrie shells per cubit in the Bamako region. As a matter of fact, the cotton gathered in the fields of the community was woven by captives who were not paid.

426 686 Loans were made without interest. Interest, korko, is still forbidden today. Loans are guaranteed by labor. The debtor who could not repay his debt on time and whose family head refused to pay it for him was seized by the Fama and held as security until such time as he had reimbursed his debt.

804 [436] Side by side with French units of measurement, the natives use their own for trade. Their measures of length: the cubit (elbow to tip of middle finger), the span, the foot, the length of both arms extended, the pace, the diare, and the kala . . . ; their measures of capacity: the sawel or mouré, the mud; their weights: the moutkhal, the catal, the large and little karoni, the wakie, the pellet of tali, of tomi, of bagana, of gelen. Cotton is weighed on rough scales whose pointer is a wooden rod and the balances large gourds hung by strings. For weights, large rocks, kulu, from 800 to 1,200 grams are used. Finally, the Bambara use French money almost exclusively: one franc of metropolitan France is equivalent to 0.50 francs C.F.A. Nevertheless, the use of cowrie shells is still frequent.

d. Banks

453 One bank of issue exists in French West Africa: the Bank of French West Africa. There are also private banks, the number of which has increased during the past few years.

The Bank of French West Africa, which has a branch at Bamako, carries out the following operations: [43]

1. discounts notes or bills of two or several signatures due in not more than 180 days;

2. creates, negotiates, or buys drafts;